

Mr. BENNETT. In that case, Madam President, on behalf of the Republican leader, I must object to the request of the majority leader.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are waiting for the legislative counsel to bring us the legislation we are going to be dealing with, so I think it would be appropriate that we be in a period of morning business until 10 of 4 and that Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each for the next however many minutes it is, and that at 10 to the hour I be recognized. I ask unanimous consent that be the order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I ask that I be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

ENERGY

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, last Thursday night, very late in the evening, this Chamber put its arms around a new energy bill. It is an energy bill that deals with making sure we move forward with alternative fuels in a robust and real way for the future of America. It is an energy bill that says we have had enough as Americans wasting 60 percent of our energy, and we can do much better on efficiency. It is an energy bill that says it is time for us to move forward from the point in time where we have tolerated vehicles that have not had the kind of efficiency we know is technologically possible in America, so we are going to adopt new CAFE standards. It is a piece of energy legislation that says we recognize the linkage between how we use fossil fuels here in America and the global warming that is occurring around our globe. So we said we would

move forward and take some new steps in the way of sequestration of carbon dioxide emissions. This is a good piece of legislation. It is a bill which we hope—I hope and I know many Members of this Senate, led by Senator BINGAMAN and Senator FEINSTEIN and others, and Senator REID—makes it to the President's desk.

I wish to remind my colleagues while I have the floor for a few minutes that, in fact, this is one of the things we have been working on in the Senate for the last several years.

In 2005, we passed the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and we said to the world: We are going to start taking the concept of energy independence for America in a very real and serious way. Last year, after some significant debate on this floor, we also opened up lease sale 181 and its extensions on the gulf coast for exploration and development of our resources.

This year, with the passage last week of the 2007 act, we put another layer on the cake in terms of trying to move forward to the reality of a world that embraces energy independence.

We still have a long way to go. We have a long way to go with this legislation. It is my hope we don't get it caught up in a procedural quagmire, either here in the Senate or in the House of Representatives, and that ultimately we get legislation that is adopted which President Bush ultimately signs into law. It is good legislation and the kind of legislation we ought to be working on in this body.

Even though there has been a lot of focus lately on the President's domestic initiative relative to immigration, the fact is that when one looks at the state of the Union and what the President said in his State of the Union Address, we as Americans are addicted to foreign oil. He said it is time for us to move forward in an aggressive and ambitious way to get rid of the addiction we have to foreign oil. We have been able to do that by embracing the committee's legislation which had that bipartisan goal in mind, that we would take some significant steps forward in this 110th Congress to deal with our overaddiction to foreign oil.

From my point of view, as I talked about this issue with the people I represent, the nearly 5 million people in the State of Colorado, I am reminded of the fact that we have come a long way in this debate on energy and that we are now facing some inescapable forces which have grabbed the attention of the American public in a way they never have before.

The first of those inescapable forces is national security. How can we as the United States say we are secure as a nation when we import, as we did in March of last year, 66 percent of our oil from foreign countries? Many of those countries we are importing our oil from are countries that are spawning terrorism around the world. So from a national security point of view, it seems to me that embracing the con-

cept of getting rid of this addiction to foreign oil is an inescapable force of our time.

That is why on this floor of the Senate you will see Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and progressives, coming together to say that as a matter of national security, this inescapable reality is something we must deal with. It was on that basis that several years ago the Energy Futures Coalition, led by the distinguished progressive, my colleague and good friend, former Senator Tim Wirth, who now runs the United Nations Foundation, together with a friend of his, C. Boyden Gray, one of the leading voices of conservative causes, came together and founded a piece of legislation that we are trying to get through this Senate now that is called the Set America Free legislation. We gave it another name as we went through our processes here in the Senate, calling it the DRIVE Act, and broke it up into different pieces of legislation. But at the end of the day, the Energy Futures Coalition and the Set America Free concept, the proposal they pushed forward, have been embodied and embraced in the legislation that was adopted by this body just this last week.

So the national security implications of what we are doing here are, in fact, an inescapable reality and an inescapable force that will lead us to a clean energy future for America in the 21st century.

Secondly, there is a major issue for us and another inescapable force we deal with in our country today, and that is the issue of our own environmental security. How will we deal with the issue of global warming? We know that is an issue we will have to deal with some more, and there will be adequate time to debate the particulars on how we might be able to move forward. This legislation, with its efforts on efficiency, with its efforts on renewable energies, including what we do with biofuels, takes us a step in that direction.

In addition, the environmental security of our Nation is also addressed in that legislation because we deal for the first time in a very real way with the issue of carbon sequestration. I see my good friend from Kentucky here who often has lauded the importance of coal, and I understand why. When you are from Kentucky, you would see the importance of coal, as I do as well, being from Colorado, as does my good friend JON TESTER from the State of Montana.

So the issue for us as we look at the coal resources of our Nation, where we have enough coal to supply the needs of the United States of America for 200 years, is how can we use this abundant energy resource in a manner that doesn't compromise our environment? We can do that. We can do that with the new technologies we have with respect to IGCC. We can do that as we learn how to sequester the carbon emissions from the burning of coal. It

is not a new technology. It is a technology which has been around for a very long time in the oilfields of my State, the oilfields of Canada, and the oilfields of many places around Colorado, as the past oil efforts we have had in our country have been dependent upon us being able to put carbon dioxide into the ground. So this sequestering of carbon dioxide is something which has been going on for a very long time.

The inescapable force of global warming and environmental security is one that is with us for a long time to come, and it is something that, in the energy legislation we passed last week, is very much addressed in that legislation.

Finally, the other inescapable force is the economic reality of our Nation with respect to a clean energy economy. I think the clean energy future for the United States of America in the 21st century creates very significant opportunities. All of us know how difficult the challenge of energy is, and all of us also know there is not going to be only one answer which is going to lead us to the necessary conclusion that we need to deal with these inescapable forces; it is going to be a portfolio. It is going to have a number of different items on that menu which deal with the energy needs of our Nation and of our world. But at the end of the day, the door we have opened here with respect to a clean energy future will create millions upon millions of jobs in America. It will create millions of jobs in those areas where perhaps they have had the most difficult time in their communities, they will be creating a viable economic activity.

For me, when I look at my State of Colorado, 2 years ago out on the eastern plains, part of that forgotten America, much like the farmland of America, whether it is Oklahoma, Kansas, the Dakotas, or the eastern part of my State, we had a population which was declining in huge numbers in many of our counties, rural and remote, and withering on the vine—part of that forgotten America where most people are not able to stay there because there are such limited opportunities. Yet, in a matter of 2 years since, in the State of Colorado we adopted a new renewable energy program, and we have seen things turn around in a very significant way. We have ethanol plants that are now functioning, providing jobs, and creating hundreds of millions of gallons of ethanol in places such as Yuma and in places such as Fort Morgan.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 2 more minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SALAZAR. So as we look at the economic opportunity that has come by way of rural America, I think that

causes us all to say there is a way in which we can revitalize rural America. We do that in the legislation we passed here last week with the 36-billion-gallon renewable fuels standard and the other programs we have in there that will open the door to a new era of biofuels. It goes beyond corn because we all understand there are limitations on corn. But the Department of Energy 2005 study itself found that somewhere over 125 billion gallons of cellulosic ethanol could, in fact, be derived once we open that new technology door. The experts who have been dealing with cellulosic ethanol say we may only be a year, a year and a half away from being able to commercially deploy that technology.

I make these comments only to say that as we deal with the issue today of immigration, as we move forward to that later on this afternoon, there are other very difficult issues we face in our Nation and in our world today. Last week, we took a significant step in moving forward with a new energy future for America. I hope it is only the beginning and that time will see us develop an even more robust, effective, and successful clean energy future for America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 12 to 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT OF 2007

Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, today I rise to speak in opposition to the so-called Employee Free Choice Act which we defeated by cloture vote. But cloture votes don't necessarily kill a bill; they have a way of resurrecting themselves, as we are about to do with the immigration bill.

Oftentimes in Congress, the people who write bills try to come up with some interesting titles for their bills, something they hope will make people remember it or tell them something about what it does. Many times, these titles can be somewhat misleading. This bill's title, the Employee Free Choice Act, takes this concept to a whole new level.

The Employee Free Choice Act actually removes choice from the employees. It removes the right of a secret ballot in elections—a cornerstone of American democracy under current law. If a group of employees wants to form a union, they must collect petition signatures or sign cards known as card checks. If 30 percent of the workers sign in favor of creating a union, then they or their employer has a right to request a secret ballot election to decide on forming a union. This election is overseen by the National Labor

Relations Board, a neutral board of observers created by the Federal Government.

The misnamed Employee Free Choice Act would change all of this. This legislation would overturn 70 years of labor law and allow unions to form in workplaces without a private ballot election by the workers. Instead, if unions could twist the arms of just over half of the employees to sign cards expressing consent, then the union is automatically certified as the union for all of the workers. Unions would be allowed to collect signatures just about anywhere: at the workplace, at home, at grocery stores, and at other places. It is easy to see how union persuasion tactics could become harassment of those who do not wish to publicly declare support for union representation.

What would politics be like if Senators and Representatives simply had to convince people to sign cards instead of voting secretly at the polls? Imagine if there were no private voting booths where people could vote their conscience privately. Small armies of campaign volunteers would hang around your house, drop by your children's school, or find you at church in the hopes of securing your signature.

Then if you signed the card, your vote is made public for your employer, your neighbors or anyone else to see. This is why we currently use this secret ballot protection for union organizations in the first place.

In the past, there were concerns that elections held without privacy would be observed by employers, and then if an employee voted to unionize, they would suffer some sort of reprisals. Apparently, my colleagues supporting this bill and their allies in big labor no longer fear employer reprisals. I think it is great that they now trust employers to observe how their workers vote to join a union. We have made a lot of progress in labor-management relationships, apparently.

However, I don't think these ballot choices should be unprotected and out in the open for both union organizers and employers to see. Whenever privacy in elections is compromised, the door is open to intimidation and coercion. Why take a chance on that? It would seem that big labor feels they can increase union membership if they know how many employees are voting on organizing. I wonder what they plan to do with this information to achieve their goals of creating more unions.

Americans enjoy the right to join a union, but the decision to join a union should be freely made in private and without intimidation or coercion. That is the only way to ensure that the choice is truly free and not forced.

According to the National Labor Relations Board, drives to form unions are successful around 60 percent of the time under the rules in place now—60 percent of the time. That is the highest it has been in 20 years. Back then, the union success rate was under 50 percent. So there is no indication that it